5.11 SOLID AND HAZARDOUS WASTE

Solid Waste Disposal

No solid waste disposal has been permitted in the Lake Tahoe Basin since 1972. To require continued export of all solid waste from the Lake Tahoe Basin, the State Board adopted the following prohibition in 1980:

"The discharge of garbage or other solid waste to lands within the Lake Tahoe Basin is prohibited."

The 208 Plan (TRPA 1988, Vol. I, page 145) provides that:

"To control potential water quality problems resulting from solid waste disposal, no person shall discharge solid wastes in the Tahoe Region by depositing them in or on the land, except as provided by TRPA ordinance. Existing state policies and laws will continue to govern solid waste disposal in the Tahoe Region."

The State Board recommended in 1980 that BMPs be developed for the disposal of excavated soil from construction sites, and that consideration be given to their use to reclaim abandoned mines, quarries, and borrow pits. It also recommended that dredged material should be considered for similar uses. Other construction wastes should be exported from the Basin.

Problems associated with former solid waste disposal in the Lake Tahoe Basin were recognized as early as 1966; they include leachate from the disposal sites, erosion due to lack of vegetation, and uncontrolled runoff from landfill surfaces. There were formerly four disposal sites within the Basin; none were operated as sanitary landfills. The USFS has done extensive erosion and drainage control work at the old Meyers Landfill, and continues to monitor its effects on water quality. All of the closed sites in California are under the ongoing surveillance of the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB). The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, in cooperation with the CIWMB and the USFS, shall continue surveillance and monitoring of old disposal sites within the Tahoe Basin to ensure that leachate and eroded sediment do not impair water quality. Where water quality problems at these sites are identified, corrective measures shall be implemented in the same manner as for sites requiring erosion control projects.

Proposals have been made to use old landfill sites in the Tahoe Basin for other purposes such as a county park or industrial development. Further cleanup of these sites may be required before additional development can be permitted.

It has been estimated that, because of the seasonal nature of the Tahoe Basin's population and the inaccessibility of some homes due to weather and terrain, only 85 percent of the refuse generated in the Basin is collected for export. Illegal dumping and littering impair the visual appeal of surface waters and stream environment zones, and contribute leachate to surface runoff. Efforts should be made to increase the amount of Basin refuse which is actually collected for export or recycling. Local governments are responsible for efforts to increase the effectiveness of refuse collection. Existing anti-litter laws should be strictly enforced. Public education and cleanup programs should be expanded. The California Conservation Corps can assist in cleanup programs. The 208 Plan (TRPA 1988, Vol.I, page 145) states that:

"Existing state policies and laws will continue to govern solid waste disposal in the Tahoe Region. Local units of government, as well as land managers such as the U.S. Forest Service, shall police their areas of jurisdiction to control unauthorized dumping of solid wastes to the maximum extent feasible.

Garbage pickup service shall be mandatory throughout the Tahoe Region, and will be so structured so as to encourage clean-up programs, composting, and recycling."

In 1980, the State Board recommended the preparation of a comprehensive solid waste management plan for the entire Tahoe Basin. Such a plan was never prepared. Current California law requires local governments to prepare solid waste management plans, and to address specific targets for waste reduction, recycling, and resource recovery. These plans should also address long-term contingency plans for disposal of Tahoe Basin wastes, since the availability of landfill space is limited by physical capacity and political constraints.

Industrial Wastes

Except for stormwater, which is addressed elsewhere in this Chapter, no industrial discharges are allowed in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Discharges of industrial wastes into Lake Tahoe or any stream in the Basin are prohibited in both California and Nevada (see the section of this Chapter on prohibitions). Current prohibitions against a discharge of industrial waste in the Lake Tahoe Basin should be continued and enforced.

Toxic and Hazardous Substance Spills

Considering the amount of urbanization and the fact that a major interstate truck route (U.S. Highway 50) passes through the Lake Tahoe Basin, possible spills of hazardous materials such as gasoline, diesel fuels, fuel oil, aviation fuel, pesticides, solvents, chlorine, and other substances create the potential for serious water quality problems. Infrequent spills of petroleum products have resulted from transportation accidents in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Numerous small spills occur at construction sites, usually due to vandalism or improper storage. Spill prevention and abatement programs are necessary to control the risk of spills affecting Lake Tahoe and its tributaries, and the ground waters and lands of the Lake Tahoe Region. In addition, hazardous waste management programs are needed to ensure that potentially hazardous substances such as paints, pesticides, household solvents, and waste motor oil are properly managed and disposed of and not discharged to lands or waters (TRPA 1988, Vol. I, page 99).

The Lahontan Regional Board's regionwide control measures for hazardous waste leaks, spills, and illegal discharges (Chapter 4 of this Basin Plan) are applicable to the Lake Tahoe Basin, as are statewide requirements for the preparation and implementation of local government hazardous waste management plans. When reviewing environmental documents and drafting waste discharge permits for marinas, tour boat and waterborne transit operations, and other activities on or near surface waters which may involve use or storage of fuels, Regional Board staff should give special attention to contingency measures for prevention and cleanup of spills.

Following the recommendations of the State Board in the 1980 Lake Tahoe Basin Water Quality Plan, the Lahontan Regional Board took the lead in development of an interagency spill contingency plan to address issues including incident reporting and lines of communication, areas of responsibility and chain of command, and response, cleanup and disposal procedures.

The USEPA, Region IX, has prepared a new interagency spill response plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin, as a supplement to its *Mainland Oil and Hazardous Substance Pollution Contingency Plan* (USEPA 1994). This plan addresses topics such as the roles, responsibilities, and jurisdictional boundaries of the agencies involved; priority resources for use by responders; training and response capabilities in the Tahoe Basin and needs for further training; and evacuation/shelter-in-place procedures. It also includes a standardized notification checklist which addresses spill response scenarios.

The 208 Plan (Vol. I, page 146) provides that TRPA shall cooperate with other agencies with jurisdiction in the Tahoe Region in the preparation, evaluation, and implementation of toxic and hazardous substance spill control plans covering Lake Tahoe, its tributaries, and the ground waters and lands of the Tahoe Region. TRPA will cooperate with the USFS, USEPA, U.S. Coast Guard, state water quality and health agencies, and local units of government to develop programs to prevent toxic and hazardous spills and to formulate plans for responding to spills that may occur. With regard to local government hazardous waste management plans, TRPA will participate on technical advisory committees, review and comment on management plans, and implement hazardous material control measures through the project review process, as appropriate, upon receiving requests to do so from state or local units of government.

The 208 Plan underscores the need for compliance by all persons handling, transporting, using, or storing toxic or hazardous substances with applicable state and federal laws regarding waste management, spill prevention, reporting, recovery, and cleanup. It also provides that underground storage tanks for sewage, fuel, or other potentially harmful substances shall meet standards set forth in TRPA ordinances, and shall be installed, maintained, and monitored in accordance with the BMP Handbook (208 Plan, Vol. II). (BMP 78 in that handbook is essentially a

reference to the applicable regulations of other agencies.)